

THE INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: Vice Admiral Wallace B. Short, USN, Ret.

INTERVIEWER: Capt. Pickett Lumpkin

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PLACE: 5817 Archwood, San Antonio, Texas 78239

L: Admiral Short, you are not a native of Texas but of an adjoining state.

S: Mississippi.

L: Great. Where were you born in Mississippi?

S: Meridian, Mississippi. It used to be the biggest city in the state, but it's not now. The first seven years of my life were spent in a little sawmill town called Eastabuchie. It's found on some maps although I don't think you can find it on the highway now. We had one Methodist, one Baptist Church, but no preachers. We didn't speak to the Methodists in those days. I was a Baptist.

L: What decided that you should get out of Mississippi and get with the U. S. Navy?

S: Well, my father was a dairy farmer and he had a little truck farm besides that and I got tired of following the old family mule named Ceilum up and down the rows and rows of corn. And I got tired of milking the cows 365 days a year. I didn't mind the work but it was awfully boring and I

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S: figured that there must be better ways of making a living and spending my life than that. But I don't know, I always wanted to go in the Navy. That desire was always there just like the wart on my right arm. So, I "cottoned up" to this Congressman's Secretary, Jesse, a man, wasn't a girl, and asked him one night in church about the possibility of going to the Naval Academy. He said, "Come down to see me tomorrow." So I went down to see him and in those days there were plenty of appointments open. The Congressman asked me whether I wanted to go to West Point or Annapolis. Well, I wanted to go to Annapolis. He had appointments for both of them. He said, "When you get to be a Captain are you going to let me eat at your table?" And I said, "Why I certainly will." So he gave me an appointment to Annapolis and I went over to Marion, Alabama to Marion Prep School, studied six weeks, took the exam. This was in June and I entered in September.

L: What year was that?

S: 1920. I was born in 1903, so . . .

L: Seventeen years old. This was your first time away from home?

S: Why, it sure was!

L: (chuckle)

S: And going to the Naval Academy with thirteen days before the upper classmen came back was not very pleasant because I had no idea what was going to happen. And it was a "high crime and misdemeanor" to have your hands in your pants

S: pockets. Well, I was standing in front of the bulletin board with both hands in my pockets when the upperclassmen found me. And you thought they were going to "shoot me at sunrise." Nobody ever told me anything. I remember the first week, they took me out in a motor launch and they had me heaving the lead." That's an eight-ten pound piece of lead on a string that tells you how deep you are. I was doing it with my left hand, although I'm right handed, and the only thing I knew was "By the mark - three" which is eighteen feet.

L: (laughter)

S: That's the only thing I knew. So I kept yelling "By the mark - three" and we went aground in two feet of water.

L: (laughter)

S: Needless to say, I didn't make any "points" on that.

L: (laughter) How much did you weigh in those days?

S: 117--weight 128 now. I'm getting big.

L: A big fellow now. Did you take part in any sports at the Academy?

S: I tried. But I have no athletic ability. I tried to make the Rifle Team and I couldn't hit the target.

L: (laughter)

S: So, I didn't make that. I decided that I would go out for the mile. It took me ten minutes to run a mile and I concluded I couldn't do that.

L: Uh huh.

S: I did go out with one member of the track team who was

S: a miler, and I followed him for two laps, one-quarter mile each, four laps to mile; and I got tired and sat down while he did the third lap. And I noticed he didn't see me, so the fourth lap I followed him up and passed him, beat him.

L: (laughter)

S: I had only run three laps, he'd run four. He wanted me to go on the track team.

L: (laughter)

S: I never did tell him that I'd only run three.

L: (laughter)

S: He thought I was unpatriotic.

L: (laughter) How about your classes? What was your best subject?

S: Ah. I guess mathematics. I just don't remember too well. They were all about equal.

L: Well, it would seem like if you were going to be a Civil Engineer, you would have to be pretty good at Math.

S: I suppose so, although, I'm a graduate engineer, I can't keep a checkbook balanced.

L: (laughter) Well, that seems to be your recommendation. After you graduated from the Naval Academy, did you go to sea?

S: Yes, I went to the U.S.S. TEXAS.

L: Oh, boy!

S: For a year, which was quite an experience and I love that old ship. She was a very happy ship. And everybody

S: was very congenial and we had a good skipper and a good executive officer, a good mess steward. And I remember one experience there: the captain had a Chinese cook called "TIP." And the captain didn't drink. You know most Navy people don't drink anyhow, Captain.

L: (laughter)

S: Captain Wettengell was one of those that never touched alcohol but I think "Tip" took a thimbleful of rice wine on festive occasions. And one night the captain invited some of Norfolk's best out to dinner. He went on shore to get them, came back to the ship about seven o'clock; everything's dark. Then he finds Tip in the galley turning an empty ice cream freezer singing Chinese lullabies. Well, needless to say, Tip was not the cook any longer. They put him down to the Junior Officer's Mess and he was wonderful.

L: (laughter) Great. A ship like that has a reputation, battleship, to be pretty spit and polish. Was that true?

S: Not on the TEXAS. I guess she was the most non-reg ship in the Navy.

L: (laughter)

S: At that time. She twisted a keel in World War I. She was over fighting the Germans in World War I, and we had short-range battle practice in those days--2,000 yards. If you can imagine anybody shooting at anything now at that distance. And we failed miserably. We made such a poor score that we had a Board or Court of Inquiry. I forget which now. We gave them all kinds of excuses. We told

S: them our keel had been twisted and how could you shoot if the keel's twisted? Besides it was rough that day and the target would drop right out from under our guns. But we didn't get away with it. They had some unkind things to say about us. I remember one gun pointer, the guy who pulls the trigger, put a shell right between the mast of the tug that was pulling the target.

L: Oh.

S: Well, the skipper of the tug was not exactly a daring soul. He cut the tow line and hightailed it to home. But, we did better in the long-range battle practice. I had to figure out the score and I figured an outstanding "first." But the people in Washington didn't agree with it. In fact, they had some unkind things to say about me and my calculations.

L: (laughter) They didn't think that that Ensign could add right. Eh?

S: No. The Captain was a nice old guy and the Exec was too, but they were kind of different and we used to go up to Caimenera near Guantanamo Bay and bring back liquor aboard ship. That was a "high crime and misdemeanor" in those days because it was during Prohibition. One night three of them came back during battle practice. The ship was dark and the Captain, a nice old guy, was holding a flashlight for 'em to come up the gangway and he heard three clumps going in the water, there were three gallons of rum that these boys had thrown overboard. And he couldn't understand it. It was

S: a mystery to him. He asked them, "What were those 'clumps' down there." And they said, "We didn't hear anything, Captain."

L: (laughter)

S: But the Exec, if you brought back liquor, he'd make you take it back and get your money back.

L: (laughter) Well, Caimanera is a small Cuban town near Guantanamo?

S: Yes.

L: Right. Just to get us placed.

S: It was full of prostitutes.

L: Prostitutes. Yes. Pretty wild, I guess it's off limits now because it's outside the walls in Castro's Cuba, I think.

S: Yes.

L: Outside the gates. How long were you on the TEXAS?

S: I was on about a year and we spent most of our time on the southern drill grounds, if you have ever heard of that. It's an area which is fairly shallow, I think it's only a few fathoms deep, maybe about thirty or forty feet deep, and we'd anchor out there at night, go into battle practice in the daytime, and Friday night we'd head in to Norfolk. Hampton Roads, "coalship" on Saturday, which was a mess. Of course, nowadays, they don't "coalship." But the whole ship would get dirty and you'd be eating coaldust for a week. And then, S--

L: When you say "coalship," you mean the power was off?

S: Well, not necessarily that. They'd bring a collier alongside, the old colliers, and they would dump these big bucketloads of coal on the deck and we'd have to shovel them down manholes and they'd go down into the coal bunkers below. And with all that coal dust flying around, it was really dirty.

L: Uh huh.

S: Everybody was black and it would take you a couple of days to completely clean up. We'd get partially cleaned up about midnight on Saturday night and then Sunday you could go ashore if you wanted to.

But we were way out in Hampton Roads and I didn't know anybody in Norfolk, you had to catch a boat in and pay \$3.00 to a taxi driver to take you downtown and boats quit running at 10 o'clock at night. So that was just about as boring as the old farm was, so I decided to go into the Civil Engineer Corps.

L: (laughter) Uh huh. Did they call for applicants for it?

S: Yes. Yes, they did. They took four out of my class.

L: Was this something you had been planning on for a long time? Or was it--

S: No, it just came along.

L: It was a good way to get off and on something else.

S: 'Course, I should have looked forward. All the Navy's not like that. But you just can't see beyond the end of your nose sometimes when you're a young fella, twenty-one



S: years old.

And the Navy sent me to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. That was preceded by a year at the post graduate school at Annapolis. Then I spent two years at Troy for which I got a "C.E." Civil Engineer and an "M.C." Master-Civil Engineer degree.

L: What does a Civil Engineer do?

S: Well, the <sup>least</sup> most glamorous is the maintenance work. You have to fix the toilets, take care of the quarters, and clean the rugs for the occupants, and take care of the furniture, and list all the complaints from the wives. Cut the lawns and things like that. That's just drudgery.

L: Uh huh. But, you say, Seabee--that means Construction Battalion?

S: Construction Battalions. Yes.

L: And that, of course, is a real famous Navy term. When did that get started?

S: It was started in World War II by Admiral Ben Morell<sup>ee</sup> who was one of our most distinguished Civil Engineers. And he went out to all the contractors and the Labor Unions and he got them to cooperate and we took artisans--and supervisors--contractors--right out of civilian life and he gave them ratings right off the bat. Some of them would come in as Chiefs and of course as Lieutenants and Lieutenant Commanders--some of them as Captains. And it worked out real well. They could really do a job. They weren't very military, but you didn't care about that in

S: the war, you just wanted to get something done.

L: Get something built. Where did a lot of these Seabees come from? Who were recruited for the war?

S: They came from construction industry. But a disproportionate number of them came from Texas. I know that in Okinawa, we had one battalion that was almost entirely of Texans. I believe it was the 148th. It was a tank battalion. I don't mean an Army tank. It was tanks for gasoline, and fuel, oil and so forth; diesel. They really did a job. I didn't have to worry about them at all.

L: I heard there was a difference in recruiting Seabees on the East Coast and Seabees in Texas and Oklahoma. Is that true?

S: Yes, of course, a recruiter will "dangle" the most attractive aspects of what you're going to do before a guy when he's thinking about joining up. And up in the East Coast--this was told to me by a recruiter--so I know it's a fact--they told them they wouldn't--if they'd come in the Seabees, they didn't have to fight. But they told the Texans and people down here in the Southwest, "You come in and you'll be able to fight."

L: "Put down your shovel and grab a gun!"

S: Yeah. Actually, we didn't do too much fighting, although the Fortieth Seabee Battalion--and they were primarily a Texas Battalion--did a lot of fighting on Los Negros--the Admiralty Islands--where I was Brigade

S: Commander-- That was before I got there, but they held a section of the line one night and they almost got pushed back to the sea. I read an account of it and it was really a harrowing time.

L: That was the island, I think, that MacArthur went in and declared it taken and that night, they almost pushed us off the island.

S: That's correct. He declared it "secure." I guess he was justified in doing so because he couldn't see anybody around. They were hiding in the jungle and they came out at nightfall.

L: What was the construction at the Admiralty Islands?

S: We had everything. We had two bomber strips. We had two fighter strips. And we had a supply depot, ship repair depot, pontoon assembly facility several piers, ammunition depot. We had a communications facility which was very important because when the fleet was in the Philippines, they could only work it at certain hours of the day through Manus (main Admiralty Island) and I remember ten hours before the invasion was started in the Philippines, some truck driver broke all wires between the antenna farm, and the control room. And we worked all night getting the thing fixed.

L: Hah! Well, if they called us back, I would have liked to have gotten the message. (laughter)

S: (laughter)

L: I've often wondered, how do you go about building an

L: air field when you're thinking about it? Do you have elaborate plans that you draw up first and then draw up a logistic plan? Or do you have to survey the field, or--?

S: It varies, Pickett. Sometimes, you just go in and build the thing without any plans. But before we went into Okinawa, so help me, we had pretty good topography and inked the drawings before we got there. I thought it was a little silly because you can't be that accurate from photographs. But, on the other hand, we had one Civil Engineer who was famous, named Bill Painter, a Commander; later Captain and he went in on some Jap-held islands and surveyed and you would think that he would hide out--keep under cover. He had those Seabees and these survey parties in there and they said he'd build a bonfire at night and drink whiskey--laugh--and just raise Hell. I suppose the Japs didn't think anybody would have that much nerve and he got away with it. He is reported to have surveyed several Japanese held islands.

L: Uh huh.

S: The big thing was to knock down the coconut trees.  
(Ship's bell on clock ringing.) (Two bells, three times.)  
(3, 7 and 11 o'clock a.m. and p.m.)

L: A lot of those plantations there were owned by Lever Brothers or somebody or other and they had to buy the coconut trees and knock them down.

S: Yes, the Australian Government there in the Admiralty Islands (Manus, Los Negros, Ponam, Pityilu) paid for them.

S: That disturbed us at first, but gee, when you think, back in this country, if you take a farmer's farm for a hospital or an airfield, well, you pay him for it. And the Australians paid them so much for each palm tree.

L: Uh huh. And you got heart of palm salad out of it, too, I suppose--

S: Oh boy, we had \$30.00 salads every day.

L: (laughter) Which of the islands did you find most interesting in the Pacific that you were on there?

S: Of course, Manus was the most interesting, but it was very unpleasant. We had anywhere from 16 to 20 inches of rain a month and it was very muddy there. Some of the Los Negros and Ponam and Pityilu, where they built air strips, were all coral. That was easy construction. But you take Manus proper and there was no coral there and we had sticky red-yellow mud. Oh, it was awful.

L: This is off the northeast coast of New Guinea.

S: Yes. Northeast of New Guinea. Mostly east of Hollandia. I flew over to Hollandia once.

L: These were islands out there--that were--

S: It's two degrees south of the equator.

L: Some of the most miserable weather in the world is down in that part of New Guinea. Some of the ugliest ladies, too. In fact, they were safe from the Japs. The women were topless but you didn't get any ideas when you looked at 'em. They had their heads shaved; chewed betel nuts; smoked corn cob pipes and usually had a baby in their arm. The men

S: had long hair on which they put lime or something. It was dyed a horrible pink. I don't know what they ate. They used to roast sloths now and then. I'd never seen a sloth before but I did there.

L: I guess they fished, too.

S: I think they did some fishing. Of course, we had plenty of K rations and C rations for 'em.

L: Were they very good at carving things?

S: I don't think so. I never saw any carving there. I remember Admiral Halsey and his staff came through there on the way to the Philippines. And he ate at our Island Commander's mess. And that was a real circus. All the people throwing rolls and pepper shakers . . . Harold Stassen was a Commander on his staff, who later ran for President. They said he was just another Lieutenant Commander. Anyhow, he was there.

Halsey had a little skit he used to put on with the doctor. The doctor would tell him to take his atabrin (for prevention of malaria) and he'd take the atabrin bottle and throw it and somebody was supposed to catch it.

L: Well, Halsey was a different personality than the American people saw him as, don't you think?

S: Yes. I knew him fairly well at Pennsacola, when I was there. I used to check the furniture in his quarters and see him quite frequently. He was a real character.

L: Had a tattoo?

S: He never showed me that.

L: I understand that the "Bull" was a typographical error for Bill and it just stuck. And it really wasn't his nickname.

S: Probably was.

L: That island, Manus Island, how long were you on the island?

S: About nine months. Then I got detached and went back to Honolulu because I got word that I was to command one of the brigades in Okinawa.

L: About how many men in a brigade?

S: It varies. You have two or more regiments. Each regiment is two or more battalions. You can take it from there. Actually on Manus, I had three regiments with 13 battalions under them. A battalion was about a thousand men. On Okinawa, I had 3 regiments with 14 battalions plus two special units of about a thousand men each--about 16,000 men. Altogether on Okinawa, we had about 100,000 construction troops. I suppose that was the greatest construction effort of all times, including the pyramids. They probably had more men, but we had more capacity for work.

L: Your heavy machinery was almost a decisive effort in the Pacific war. I remember seeing what the Japanese had when we captured New Georgia. It was pretty pitiful. I said right then, I think we're going to win this war.

S: When I left Okinawa, we put all of our equipment in one place. And we had 40 acres of heavy equipment . . . I

S: think the Chinese wound up with a lot of it.

L: Where was the principal effort in your construction in Okinawa? Was it near Naha City or Buckner Bay or . . . ?

S: Mine was not near Buckner Bay. I had the brigade which had the central part of the island. We built everything on Katchen Hanto which is a peninsula to the east. And we built the Awasi air strip; built the supply depot which was by far the biggest construction project. And we built several piers which a hurricane knocked down, incidentally.

As a matter of fact, those darn hurricanes knocked down all of our quonset huts.

L: Were you there in the big hurricane of '45? Was it '45?

S: We had three of 'em in '45. That was quite an experience. I was riding around in a jeep with my boss, Commodore Bisset, and the windshield of that jeep was moving back and forth about four inches. I was afraid it was going to snap off and break my leg. He kept wanting to go places and with a sickly smile I'd say, "No. Let's go home."

These quonset huts, a gust of wind would catch 'em and they'd shudder a little bit and the whole thing would come down. We had several piers. We had a causeway to them out of coral, and that disappeared, just left the pier standing out in the water.

We had a breakwater for the supply depot which disappeared. The coral stone which we used was just too light. The waves just picked them up and scattered them.



S: That first hurricane the ship out there said the anemometer read 150 knots . . . that's, I don't know, 170 miles an hour. I didn't believe it. But the Army engineers told me later, when I went back as a Rear Admiral, they had 200 miles an hour winds there. And all of the quonset huts, by that time, had disappeared.

L: Well, they sank ships and the whole business. But your primary construction effort was in port facilities and air fields, and barracks headquarters, communications stations . . . the whole smear.

S: It was the whole smear. The biggest projects as I said, was the supply depot. We built an ammunition depot, too. And we built one airfield. We had several of them there.

L: This was being built to support the invasion of Japan, I presume.

S: Fortunately, it didn't come off. Fortunately, the invasion didn't come off because it would have been delayed because that hurricane just knocked everything down; practically had to be rebuilt except the roads and the airfields.

L: The invasion was cancelled after the dropping of the atom bomb. I'm not sure whether that's the reason. I really think the Japanese were already defeated.

S: Oh, they were but I don't know if they'd have given up without the atom bombs. Of course, that's something else.

L: The Seabees had quite a bit to do with building airfields in the central Pacific, in the Mariannas, etc.

L: Saipan, Guam, for the B-36's to bomb Tokyo.

S: Yes.

L: Were you involved in any of those fields?

S: I was involved in the . . . We built two bomber fields in the Admiralty Islands. I don't believe they bombed Japan from there. Too far.

L: That was to support the invasion of the Philippines at Leyte.

S: They did a lot of bombing from Guam on Japan. Talked to some of the bombers.

L: I know the Seabees started building on Guam practically before the island was secured. Those air fields. I think they went in there in July or something like that. They were flying bombers off in November.

After World War II, I went to the headquarters, Washington, D.C. I served my sentence there in the Bureau of Yards and Docks. I was what they called Assistant Chief in Administrative management. It really meant that I was Chief Clerk on one hand and Personnel Officer for the Civil Engineering Corps on the other hand. The latter was most important.

L: The Civil Engineer Corps is a separate Corps in the Navy. Has its own insignia.

S: The Civil Engineer Corps builds and maintains the shore establishment for the Navy and also they provide offices for the Seabees. The first Civil Engineer of any reknown was Admiral Perry who went to the North Pole. He was Rear

S: Admiral, USN, but actually he was a Civil Engineer. Congress made him a Rear Admiral, they left off the Civil Engineer, CEC.

All of the Civil Engineer Corps, Engineer graduates, you have to have an engineering degree to get in. They have branched out into any number of things. Environmental protection work and research, loading and unloading ships, pollution and so forth.

They call 'em now . . . it used to be the Bureau of Yards and Dock and now they call 'em Facilities Engineering Command. It's the same outfit. I'll always call it the Bureau of Yards and Docks.

L: "Docks" to me.

S: "Docks" to me, too. Always will be.

L: How do you recognize the uniform of a . . .

S: Well, we have an insignia which we call crossed bananas. But actually it's crossed live oak leaves. There are four of 'em. Two of 'em are crossed. Somebody said it was supposed to be two dividers.

L: I never heard of that.

S: So we call 'em crossed bananas.

L: Looking back, halfway through your career now, are you glad that you went into Civil Engineering Corps?

S: Oh, very much so. Of course, taking care of quarters and cutting the lawn, taking care of the toilets and things like that is very boring . . . not exactly boring but not my idea of something big. When you get into new construction

S: work, handling Seabees and doing the things that I did. It's very interesting. I'm glad that I went in it.

My last two tours, really, commanding the Atlantic Seabees and Director of Construction in Spain, and Director of the Pacific Division of the Bureau of Yards and Docks where I had command of all the Seabees in the Pacific . . . construction work west of Honolulu, couldn't have been more interesting. I was my own boss. Nobody ever seemed to pay much attention to what I was doing. I traveled on my own, whenever I wanted to; had to; had my own job. And I guess, as long as I kept out of trouble nobody bothered me. I wouldn't have had it any other way.

L: One of the biggest international projects we had after World War II was in Spain. And you were right there at Rota and to a large degree in charge of the whole construction of those pipelines at Rota.

S: I wasn't especially in charge. I was on the staff of the Air Force. I had 42 Air Force Engineers directly under me. One Naval Captain. I was the liaison between the officer in charge of construction, had charge of the work, and the Air Force who was a customer.

I suppose my main job was smoothing out the differences between those two. And also, my boss, who was General August Kissner, thought it would show cooperation between the services, for me to show VIP's around. And that was a very interesting job. I know I showed Senator Long, Senator Russell, armed services committee. I spent about a week

S: with him showing him around here. President Ford was a Congressman then and I spent a day or two with him. I showed General Jimmie Doolittle and General Partridge around. That's an interesting story. I don't know whether you want to go into that here or not.

L: Well, General Doolittle was quite a talker, according to one of my bosses.

S: He was. I tried to show him around Madrid, Torrejon, which was the main air field there, and I couldn't get in a word edgewise. "General this is a hospital, this is our water tank . . ." "Oh, Admiral, you ought to see those girls down in Majorca." He'd been down at Majorca the night before. Apparently he'd met up with some pretty girls down there. Says, "You get Augie . . . (that's General Kissner) to take you down there some weekend." I says, "Shall I take along a blonde?" "Oh no, you don't take coals to Newcastle."

I didn't say two words the whole day, hardly. He gets back to Washington and said, "That Admiral over there sure knows his stuff."

S: I don't know how he knew because I didn't say two words. I just listened to him.

L: The main project, I guess, was to build the naval base at Rota and build the various air bases like at Torrejon and the pipelines to feed those bases. Is that the picture, generally?

S: That's correct. We also had some huge fuel oil

S: facilities. P.O.L. . . . Petroleum Oil and Lubricants. We had one of those up north and we had one down south. We had a big supply base at a place called Moron. That runway at Torrejon was the longest one in Europe at that time. I don't know whether it is now or not.

Of course, the Navy had a big naval base at Rota.

L: At that time, General Franco was the dictator of Spain.

S: Yes. They have democracy over there now. I really don't know how different it is but you'd hardly know you were living in a dictatorship. He allowed a certain amount of freedom as long as you didn't carry it too far.

I remember the principal contractor we had over there, a fellow named Agroman, used to say that Franco was a robber and so forth . . . proclaim that loudly at a cocktail party but as long as he didn't get too far out of line, he kept his head and kept his work.

They had all kinds of informal organizations like that who'd meet here and there every Thursday at a certain hotel; hash over how they're going to put the king back on the throne and so forth. He allowed a certain amount of freedom but not too much.

L: He had a cut-off point.

After you left Spain, where did you go?

S: That was my last tour of duty. I was Director of the Pacific Division Bureau of Yards and Docks. I had charge of all construction work west of Honolulu. Plus the Seabees.

L: What year was that?

S: That was 1957 to 1959. Most interesting tour of duty. Spent an awful lot of time traveling. I figured it out once, or somebody did, I spent 43 percent of the time in the western Pacific.

L: Were you beginning to build any bases in the Southeast Asia for participation for what later became the Vietnam War?

S: Yes, we had four airfields in Thailand. I forget the name of 'em. But later on, they were worth their weight in gold. At the time, we didn't anticipate what was going to happen there, of course. I remember CINCPAC, (Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Area) had come to me when we finally got things going . . . we had a lot of trouble with Thai contractors out there. And said, "What will it cost to stop building these things?" You wouldn't save but about 5 percent by that time because they were too well along.

The next year, when they had a little trouble over there, they were worth their weight in gold. And they beefed 'em up and flew all these missions out of Thailand.

L: As I remember, there were about four fields and a Naval base of some kind there.

S: Yes. Sattahip.

L: Sattahip. I've been there. This construction you did, the actual work was done by the local people. Was that correct?

S: Not entirely. As I just said, we had a lot of trouble. We had a Thai contractor who was the low bidder on the two

S: first fields and he didn't get anything done, hardly. I don't know what the trouble was, exactly, but in two years he didn't get anything done, hardly. He had a lot of cement out there which hardened in his warehouses. Nothing was getting done. I believe we had five fields. There were three more. He was the low bidder on those. And he wasn't getting anything done so I took three landing fields away from him and readvertised it. American contractor got the job and built them. They finally built the first two.

We had a guarantee, bank guarantee, but I don't think it was worth very much because the bank didn't have any money. I understand they had done a little speculating; I guess the horses didn't come in, so . . . that guarantee was no good.

We just paid him for what he had done on the other fields and then readvertised them.

L: When you readvertised, you got other contractors.

S: We got a contractor from the west coast, American contractor, very interesting work for him over there because most of those bridges around that countryside wouldn't take his heavy equipment. He knew what he was doing. He took along timber and beefed 'em up, beefed up the bridges in order to get his heavy equipment in these places. He knew what he was doing.

L: Would he ship his heavy equipment in from the United States? Would the Navy bring it in or would he ship it in commercial?



S: He shipped it in himself. The Navy didn't bring it in.

The Thai contractors bought this equipment. They had some beautiful equipment. It sat there for two years without being used.

L: When the American contractor came in, did he use Thai labor?

S: A lot of it. But of course, they're not too good at operating our heavy equipment. And he used common labor and unskilled, yes.

L: The machine operators and so forth . . .

S: He bought those in.

L: The Texan contractor.

S: Brown and Root. They were in Spain. We had a combination of Brown and Root, Raymond and Walsh.

L: I guess Spain is where they got their big start, wasn't it . . . Brown and Root?

S: I think they were big contractors before that. I know they built the Navy Ammunition Dept. up at MacAllister, Oklahoma. They were in competition with me who built one at Hastings, Nebraska. But in Spain, it was Brown and Root, Raymond and Walsh. B.R.W. we called 'em. They did a good job.

L: What is really the big difficulty . . . when you go into construction overseas . . . things like air fields and so forth . . . what is the big problem. Or are there too many?

S: Well as I said, his first problem was getting his

S: equipment there. But with his American know-how, supervision and equipment operators, they didn't have too much of a problem. They'd go right ahead.

The Spaniards were more advanced, of course than the Thais, in that respect. The Spaniards used to do a lot of . . . this was in 1955 to '57, they used to move a lot of dirt with donkeys, mules.. They didn't have too much heavy equipment. But they got it done. They didn't pay 'em too much. A workman would get about a dollar a day.

I remember John L. Lewis came over there once; talked to a lot of the workmen. Asked them how much they made and so forth. Remember John L. Lewis?

L: Oh yes, he was the big miner from West Virginia. [Labor leader]

S: We were taking his picture and asked him to smile and he said, "I'm not going to do it; I'm not going to step out of character."

L: He talked pretty tough. I guess he came up through a tough field, too.

What was the other . . . we were talking about construction in Spain and southeast Asia . . . are there other fields that you worked in for the Navy? In other areas?

S: Well, yes. I had charge of construction of the Naval Ammunition Depot in Crane, Indiana. And also one in Hastings, Nebraska. They were large areas. The one in Indiana, Burns City; Crane it now is, they changed the

S: name, was a hundred square miles. We had 1700 magazines. At that time, the cost was about \$55,000,000. The ratio of cost between then and now is about 5. So that would be about \$275,000,000.

L: Is that still functioning?

S: Still functioning. Although most of it has been turned over to the Army. The Army is handling all the storage and loading of shells and mines and so forth. But the Navy has command and it's called Naval Weapons Center. And they do a lot of research there.

The one in Nebraska covered about 75 square miles. But it has been abandoned and turned back to General Services Administration. And I think they have an industrial park in the old administrative and industrial area. And I understand the farmers are cultivating, right up in and over the magazines we had. It was a very interesting job in Nebraska. In both places.

L: I guess you came along before the nuclear weapons storage problems, and--

S: Yes, I never heard of them until I was in Okinawa and they dropped one on Hiroshima. I understand that Crane, Indiana, has no nuclear weapons. Of course, I wouldn't know.

L: Uh huh.

S: Naturally, Nebraska has none because they are getting turned back to the civilian economy.

L: Of course, here in Texas they have storage facilities,

L: I believe and production facilities in the Panhandle or out that way. In Amarillo.

S: That's what I understand.

L: But I'm not an expert on that.

What was the date you were, roughly, in Spain?

S: 1955 to 1957. The construction work was pretty well along by that time. I say, well along. It was started and about 40 percent completed. Usually, things are very slow at the start. Your problems occur to get things rolling. And they were just about rolling when I got there.

L: You just have to keep it going then.

S: Keep it going, yeah.

L: (laughter)

S: Unfortunately, I didn't speak any Spanish to speak of. That was sort of embarrassing because I would go to dinner--

END OF TAPE I, Side 1, 45 minutes

TAPE I, Side 2

L: I think Spanish can be particularly a problem to a Southerner, as I remember it.

S: Well, Mississippi English and Spanish didn't mix. I had a private tutor over there. He was sent over there to further Public Relations between the Navy and the Spaniards.

S: And he gave me private lessons but they never did take.

It was pretty embarrassing, too. I'd go to dinner at the Ambassador's or get in a conference: I'd say something in my limited Spanish, "How are you" or something like that.

L: (laughter)

S: And I'd get this "blast" back and then the conversation was over. I didn't have a word of instruction before I went there and I only knew I was going a week before I went.

L: It was a "hurry-up" job to go over there.

S: Yes, that's right.

L: Well, we were talking a little while ago about Okinawa and that was really a magnificent construction effort out there.

S: Yes. We had, I don't know if I mentioned it, one hundred thousand construction troops out there: Army and Navy. And they were under the command of a Navy Commodore. It wasn't me, I was head of one of the Brigades. I had about 16 Battalions.

L: Were you a Captain at that time?

S: I was a Captain when I went there but I made, I was promoted, to Commodore. Spot promoted, shortly after I got there. They had one paragraph saying that you're a Commodore and about three paragraphs saying you don't get any extra pay.

L: (laughter)

S: You get Captain's pay. (laughter)

S: I had a real Southern Exec there from--First one was from Texas--a guy named Turrentine. We called him Turpentine.

Later on we had another one who was a fellow from Richmond. He was a real character. He'd come in and say, "Commodo' T. The mud out there is hip deep to a tall Indian."

L: (laughter)

S: And the head guy out there--the head Commodore--somebody--the staff had gotten together and purchased him some flag china--the one with the star on it-- He thought that the boys did it out of the love of their hearts for him, but I have my doubts about that. I think they thought they'd "grease up" the boss a little bit. "Butter him up" a little bit.

Well, they unloaded it in my supply depot--they called it an "ABCD"--an Advance Base Construction Depot-- He never saw it because somebody stole it and he blamed it on me.

L: (laughter)

S: He said, "I want you to take every man out of this 34th Battalion and put a ring around there and guard that place." 'Course, we didn't do it. For about two months after that, he'd ask me everytime I saw him if I'd found the guy who stole that china. You couldn't find out a thing like that out there. The Seabees were the biggest thieves in the Navy, anyway.

L: (laughter)

S: I'd say, "Oh yes, Commodore, I'm looking." I said, "We'll find 'em." Of course, I didn't pay any attention to it at all. The Okinawans, (that's another subject) had a-- They had huge ovens in their kitchens and the story was that they used to cook goats whole in there. I guess they wanted to be sure the meat was fresh. Well, goats didn't cooperate. They claimed that they'd put a goat in there in that hot oven and he would just raise "hell."

We had a Brigade Doctor, who was supposed to go around and inspect the mess halls and the sanitary facilities. He was a gynecologist in civilian life. If you can imagine a Brigade doctor with a bunch of rough and tough Seabees who was a gynecologist! I think he was a little out of his element. Anyhow, he was always talkin' shop at meals. Finally, my Exec turned to him and said, "Doctor, do you have to talk shop at every meal?" (I cleaned it up a little bit.)

Oh, I had a tent. We occupied a little tiny village where we set up our Brigade Camp. And I had a tent right by a walk where the Japanese used to come down. Sometimes they would get through our perimeter guard and walk right by my tent. So I had the boys build me a foxhole over it and they took some 4 x 4's, put 'em around my cot, and they cut out a piece of an LST door and stuck it over the top. Well, the boys around there intimated that I was a little "chicken." 'Course, they didn't say that to me directly because I was the boss. I didn't care, but anyhow, things got a little

S: hot around there one night and guns poppin' all over the place--anti/aircraft guns--sounded like some of them were right in camp. And that foxhole was full of people in about two seconds.

L: (laughter)

S: They didn't call me "chicken" anymore. We had our officer's toilet over an old well and they'd been getting water out of it. We used that. Course, all of them out there, they had no private screens--they weren't private. They just had an insect screen around and you would sit there in the morning on the throne and wave to all your friends as they went by.

L: (laughter)

S: I said to myself, "They won't use that well again for its original purpose for a thousand years after what we done to it." But when I went back later in 1955 to 1957, my last tour of duty, that well had returned to its original use.

L: (laughter)

S: I don't know whether anybody got sick or not.

Another funny incident happened. I was back in Honolulu and I left my staff on one of these islands. They didn't want to transport the whole staff back to Honolulu, but I was back helpng to make plans for Okinawa. And my — Exec took an LCVP--that's a Landing Craft Personnel--Vehicle Personnel--and he fixed the thing all up. He was going to entertain nurses on it.

L: (laughter)



S: He must have spent a few battalion months on the thing and they got after him about it down there and he said he was building it for Commodore Short. Of course, I didn't know anything about it.

L: (laughter)

S: (laughter) But right now I don't know what happened to the thing.

L: That's about a forty-foot landing craft, I think.

S: Yes, about a forty-foot landing craft. Yes.

L: (laughter)

S: About fifteen days after the invasion, it started raining. All of the combat troops were scattered out all over the island. And after about two days of trucks going through that mud, you couldn't move. And they had to airdrop supplies and ammunition to all the troops. Well, anyhow, my camp was about a block and a half off of the main road and that road down there was about up to hip deep for the "tall Indian." And the telephone lines went out and my boss couldn't get at me. And I thought, that was a good idea because before that he had been calling me up in the middle of the night, chewing me out about something I didn't know anything about, so I thought that was a good idea and it took us the longest time to get that road and telephone line fixed. I think it took about six weeks.

L: (laughter)

S: Most peaceful part of the war--and my boss kept asking me, "When are you gonna get that thing fixed?"

S: And I'd say, "Well, we're working on it . . . We're having a lot of trouble." I didn't tell him that I'd left it off intentionally.

L: (laughter) Leave the phone off the hook, eh?

S: Yeah.

Another funny thing. Well, wasn't funny, you know, but-- You know the Seabees had publicity, "WE BUILD -- WE FIGHT." So after the island was secured, they told me I was the area defense commander for the central part of the island. I said, "WHAT!" I said, "I'm an Engineer. I don't know how to fight." "Well," they said, "That's what your publicity says. But anyhow you're the senior one over there, you're it." I said, "What'll I do?" Well, they told me to check up on all of the perimeter guards around the places and it was a good idea because there was a hospital right over close by us, about, oh, I guess, a block, a block and a half, and they had a perimeter guard. It was in this perimeter guard of this 34th Battalion. And one night, some poor Okinawans got caught between us there. These hospital corpsmen didn't know who they were, so they started shootin' at 'em. Course the bullets came right across our--over our camp--and we started shootin' back. So you had the Seabees fightin' the Hospital Corpsmen there. Sounded like the Battle of Manassas. Fortunately, I was down in this little valley in this little town. And I could hear the bullets whistling overhead but I knew that none of them could hit me, but they did get some of the Seabees up on the hill.

S: I think they wounded five or six of them.

They had a sugar mill in Okinawa. And the ships, Navy ships, took great pride in shootin' at that thing because it was a good target. And they really lambasted that thing to rubble. And of course, when we got all through, we had to build it back so they'll have something to make money off of.

We had one Battalion Commander who committed suicide over there. He--they had a reorganization--and they shifted the battalions around, from an organization which was, according to the kind of work you did, to one by areas. And he was giving up some battalions and I was getting them. And he was getting two battalions he didn't like; they were colored people. Well, I guess he was sort of a racist. He said he'd been out there a long time and all he's getting was two colored battalions. And he and I were supposed to have a conference one morning on the change over and he didn't show up. And he'd shot his operations officer the night before and then killed himself. He turned the gun on himself.

L: Huh. Was his operations officer black? Or?

S: No. Heavens, no.

I saw an interesting Japanese bomb out there. They called it a "baka-bomb." Did you ever hear of it?

L: Yes.

S: B A K A. I saw one. It was on a truck.

L: Uh huh.

S: It looked like a little airplane. I don't think they had a chance to train in it. Because once you got in it it was a one way trip.

L: Anyway, it was a "manned" bomb, wasn't it?

S: It was on a truck. And we were standing around this truck. We didn't know what it was and we saw a bomb go off in the coral just outside the beach. We were standing on the beach. I didn't know whether it was some Seabees blasting coral or a bomb, but anyhow, we ran, we dived under the truck, and the truck driver took off. "You guys can hide under that truck if you want to but there's a thousand pounds of TNT on it."

L: (laughter)

S: So we . . . I saw one of those old battleships, I believe it was the New York, and it was firing shells over our head, and I was sitting on the side of a mountain eating lunch, and somebody told me that the pilot of this plane, they had a spotter plane, that he saw some action down there and please drop a few shells in there, and they did, and the action stopped. And they said what happened? Ship says, "What happened?" He says, "I'll go down there and take a look." He went down and took a look and he said, "Oh yes, there's a dead donkey down there." So, they'd wasted a few 14 inch shells on a donkey.

We used to amuse ourselves on Okinawa by listening to the Radar Tracking Bogies. Bogies were Japanese airplanes. They had some of the darndest names for those things.

S: Arsenic and Old Lace; Bridegroom; you name it.

My Exec, as I say from Richmond, he used to go up once a week and play poker with the boys up in the battalion who were in the same perimeter we were. But in order to get back to his tent, he had to go outside the perimeter and come back. He would stand behind the rock and say, "SENTRY--SENTRY--this is Commander Lancaster." He said, "I don't know what the password is, but lemme by." And you know, no Jap could immitate the Southern drawl-- They always let him by.

L: (laughter)

S: The Japs seemed to infiltrate that area quite a bit and we had perimeter guards and they had trip wires out there; they had trip flares. And you could just tell what was happening out there because some poor Jap would come around and he would trip this flare and you'd hear 'em shootin' a machine gun at him. They usually carried the hand grenade with them and as soon as they saw the jig was up, they'd explode this thing and kill themselves. And practically every morning, when you'd go up to chow, to this Battalion, where we ate at the time, and see a dead Jap around. I'd feel sorry for the poor little guys.

We used to see a lot of kamikazes there. I don't think that they would waste a bomb on a shore establishment. We used to see them go over our head and go after the ships. Dive into 'em. We couldn't see most of the time what's happening to 'em on account of the trees.

L: Well, the kamikazes took quite a heavy toll with the

L: fleet there. It was really quite a Naval battle for Okinawa. Everybody thinks of the land battle, but we lost a lot of ships.

S: We did. But we didn't lose as many as the Japs thought because a lot of those ships would unload and take off. And the Japs would come over the next day and see that there were ten ships less than there were the day before and they thought they had sunk them. But actually they had just unloaded and gone off somewhere else. I saw three American planes come over my head once and nobody shot at 'em and all of a sudden somebody let go at 'em and every gun on the island turned loose at 'em and shot one of them down. One of our own planes. We were living in a foxhole at the time and the Japanese had built it and it had a concrete roof. It was full of rats, so-- and-- I had-- I built a shelter half tent over my cot and I could hear those rats running around on there. They couldn't--footing wasn't very good on that--and I could hear them sliding down.

And the goats used to come in there, too. We had no perimeter guard at the time. This was "D" plus "Two." Second day of the Invasion. And I was nervous and I had on a pair of socks, khaki and four blankets--it was cold--it was about 40, 41 or 42 degrees there--and I'm nervous, too--have to go out to go to the bathroom occasionally and you see the goats were wandering in and out--I didn't know whether they were Japs or goats. We had a trigger happy Captain in there and we'd come back in there and step on

S: those panels that we had down to make a noise--and he'd say, "Who's there?" And you'd hear him clickin' that '45, and I'd say, "Just us goats."

L: (laughter) What day did you come in? On land?

S: "D-Day"--plus one. Second day. The 1st of April was "D-Day" and I went ashore "D-plus one."

L: Were you in an LST? Or what were you in? When you came in?

S: I came in on the USS Montauk. It was a--I understand from the Captain--who was a classmate of mine--that they had four uses for that thing. Four--it was supposed to have four different missions before they finally settled on the one they had. And it would--you could sink the thing a little bit--built that way like a floating dry dock--and float amtracks out the stern--. We came in on that.

L: Sort of like an LST? Or?

S: Yeah. I don't remember whether they sank it a little bit or they just went off a ramp at the rear. But she was full of equipment that floated off. Well, I remember we went ashore in a landing craft and it was piled high with mattresses--our old mattresses and gear--and so forth. And the darn coxswain (boat captain) sank the thing in about four feet of water. But we got ashore and everybody's hammock and clothes were wet except mine. I had the foresight to store mine on top. But my boss' were all wet, which pleased me. I shouldn't say that--

L: (laughter) Well, I had a flotilla of LCT's there.

L: You would have come in dry with me. (laughter)

S: (laughter)

L: We had them 105 feet long and they couldn't sink because we had so many watertight compartments, that they were impervious to attack.

S: It's funny what Seabees would do to a person. I remember we had a supply officer who was very "regulation." And somebody got hold of some round eggs, instead of this powdered stuff when we first got there and he wouldn't let the cook use them because it was "non-regulation" to have them. Before we got through with him, he was the biggest thief in the Navy.

L: (laughter)

S: He would bring in steaks and all kinds of fancy foods. Frozen strawberries--and I asked him how he got them and he said, "It's a trade secret." Well, I didn't want to go any further than that. We had another Chaplain who was one of the best Baptist Chaplains I'd ever heard. He was so good that the Navy sent him down to Key West to preach to Truman. Well, I heard him say from the pulpit once that he used to be a Seabee Chaplain and that "Seabees taught me to steal." He thought that wasn't a very good thing to say from the pulpit, so he said, "Well, it really wasn't stealing, it was just putting materials to use." (laughter)

L: (laughter)

S: But they got things done.

I heard another story once about an "Acorn" unit.



S: That's an aviation unit. It had an iceflake machine. That's a machine that makes flakes of ice and they were very valuable. They were worth their weight in gold. This "acorn" unit had it and they put a guard on it because there was a Seabee unit that was going to move up forward in about a week and they had their eye on it and these aviators knew it so they put a guard on it. One day the guard had to make an extreme call of nature and he left the compound for about two minutes and that ice flake machine was gone and on a ship. And when it got up where it was going, they uncrated it and had their mouth watering and so forth, and inside was a bunch of old scrap iron. There was this big sign, "This is what you get--you lousy thieving bastards."

L: (laughter)

S: (laughter) They lost it.

S: Well, let's see here.

People out there in the Pacific used to get what you call atabrin tan. (Ship bells ringing on clock--)  
Atabrin--that is what we took in place of quinine to keep down the malaria. And it would turn you an ungodly yella'. You looked like a Chinaman when you got back. I had it. The only guy that got malaria on Okinawa was the staff doctor, a Captain, he was a favorite of the Island Commander, and he wasn't takin' his atabrin. He was the only one that got malaria on Okinawa. (laughter)

L: (laughter)

S: Captain Ceres. That was a nice guy.

L: Captain Ceres. Did he become an Admiral?

S: Captain Freddy Ceres.

This fellow that used to go in on these Jap-held islands; was named Bill Painter. As I said, he would get drunk--at least he'd drink whiskey and have a big time. Later on, he went to Greece and the Communist captured him, took all his money away and his jewelry and kicked him in the rear end. After he went through all that, he came back to Washington and was sittin' on the stern of a houseboat there in the Potomac River and they had an explosion down below and it blew him overboard and killed him. After he had gone through all that-- Then he was late for his own funeral--they cremated him and his ashes didn't show up for about an hour--my assistant handled all that and he said we had to wait up there for forty-five minutes for Bill Painter to show up.

L: (laughter)

S: And I said, "Why didn't you fake it?" And he said, "Well, I was afraid to but," he said, "when he showed up it looked like an old beer can anyhow."

L: (laughter)

S: That was Bill Painter.

L: So you had your last tour of duty in the Hawaiian Islands there at Makalopa and Kamahamea highway as I remember it.

S: That's right. Very interesting tour of duty.

L: It lasted about two years.

S: A little over two years.

L: Well, what were the years on that?

S: '57 to '59. Then I retired in 1959.

L: And then when you retired, you didn't really retire.

You've had a number of big projects that you got involved with. I guess that's one of the advantages a CEC Officer has over a Line Officer.

S: Yes, I passed myself off as a port consultant.

L: Oh.

S: I'd never been in a civilian port in my life. And when I got the job, I thought they were going to hire me as sort of a construction specialist or advisor, but it turned out it was mostly port operations. And I-- So I say, I passed myself off as a consultant.

L: Where was that?

S: Well, we first went to Pakistan.

L: Oh.

S: And surveyed the port at Karachi and in Dacca, (note: now Bangladesh) which is in East Pakistan. And then I went along the Makran coast with the idea of establishing four small ports along there.

L: Uh huh.

S: The Thai Navy loaned me a mine sweeper to go out there. We spent about a week cruising along there and stopped at four places and inspected them. We didn't have any motor boats.

L: This is off Thailand?

S: Yeah, Southern coast of Thailand--No--Pakistan.

L: Sorry.

S: And I turned in a report. I don't think anybody ever paid much attention to it, but I got paid anyhow. I think what those people were looking for--this was a U.S. Army project--was somebody to rubberstamp what they wanted to do in the first place. We didn't do that--and then they didn't pay any attention to the report. Later on, I went to Thailand. Bangkok, which I love very much. The Thais are the nicest people in the world. And we surveyed the feasibility of four ports there--four minor ports--the main port, of course, is in Bangkok proper. And that was a very interesting tour of duty. I say those Thais are the nicest people in the world.

L: They are. Gentle.

S: Gentle. And they never seem to get mad. The traffic, even in those days, this was in about 1963 or 1964, the traffic was something awful. If you've seen a rush hour in Washington, D.C. or New York City, it's nothing to that. Nobody ever got mad. They figure Buddha would take care of them and from what I can see, Buddha did a pretty good job.

L: (laughter)

S: We had a most interesting Thai Captain that I was working with and he spoke very good English. He came in one morning and he says, "Oh, Admiral--Admiral--I have big headache." "What's the matter Captain?" "Last night I drink much mekong." That's that horrible native whiskey

S: there. "My wife she make many words. I make no words. So this morning, oh, I have big headache."

"Well, I said, "Captain, I thought Thai man master in his house--wife do what he say." It gets to where you speak that pidgin English against them. I said, "My book say Thai man master." He says, "My wife no read book."

L: (laughter)

S: So the next morning he comes in, "Good morning, Captain. You got a headache this morning?" "No. I no have headache every day." (laughter)

L: Yeah, they're great people. Fun loving and jolly.

S: Oh, yeah.

L: They get along.

S: He took me on a boat trip up the Mekong River there--way up to the summer palace of the former Kings. We no sooner get aboard this boat and he said, "Admiral, where's whiskey?" I said, "Oh, I got it here." I busted out a bottle of scotch which I knew he'd drink. "What, just one bottle?" I said, "Well, oh, I got one bottle for you and one for the rest of us." "Oh," he says.

L: (laughter) Great. Did you ever do any construction work in connection with the Vietnam War?

S: No, I was retired by then.

L: Well, I mean, as a civilian? There?

S: . No. That was done by a combination of contractors and Seabees. They had as many Seabees as they could get--they called in a lot of reserves--and then they had a big

S: contract. I think it was a billion dollar contract.

Probably the biggest one the Navy has ever had.

L: Well, that was another Brown-Root-Raymond International?

S: They were in there, yeah. I would have liked to have been there but I had had my fun in World War II.

L: What made you settle down and retire in San Antonio?

S: San Antonio?

L: San Antonio.

S: Well, I was living in Jacksonville, Florida, which is, as you know, mostly a Navy town. And I have two sisters who live in San Antonio. 'Course, I used to visit them frequently, and I liked it here and moved over here. I like Jacksonville, too, but I like it better here. I like every place I've ever been except Manus. I didn't care for that.

L: (laughter)

S: All that heat and humidity. Everybody had "jungle rot" out there.

L: Oh, yeah.

S: I used to get my feet fixed up every night.

Fortunately, I lived in a hut with a doctor.

L: That terrible iodine--that stuff all over your feet.

S: Oh, yeah. We sent a lot of people back because they just couldn't cure it. Mine was just arrested. When you get back in this cold climate it just goes away.

L: Well, San Antonio is a good place to retire. At least from my point of view and presumably yours. How long have you been-- When did you come to San Antonio?

S: 1969. I've been here 15 years now.

L: And your sisters had come from Mississippi--have lived here?

S: Well, the sister who came here was an Army Nurse. She retired a Lieutenant Colonel. She was the Fifth or Fourth Army Nurse. I forgot what it was then. And then she retired here. Another sister came to live with her--so that's the reason I am here.

L: Well, we are glad you made your home here.

S: I like it here. It's one that treats me pretty well.

L: Well, thank you very much, Admiral Short, for your time and your energy and we will be back to you.

END OF TAPE I, Side 2, 25 minutes

END OF INTERVIEW